2: Stefansson--97 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
116, 224, 501

"The kayak might be described as a hunting implement for it is only incidentally used for other purposes than spearing caribou. It is never used, we were told, for sealing. A sufficient explanation for which is that the people are never on the sea and seldom near it during the period of open water. The kayak has, so far as we know, disappeared during the present generation from among Kanhiryuarmiut, the Nuwukpagmiut, Haneragmiut, and Akuliakattagmiut and is owned by less than one hunter of five among all the other groups familiar to us. It seems in danger of becoming obsolete."

2: Stefansson--237 (1908-12) 1914 Copper Eskimo
501, 117

"Kayaks and Umiaks. Kayaks and umiaks are not made now by either Haneragmiut or Akuliakattagmiut, though some have had kayaks in recent years who now have none."

3: Rasmussen--48 [4] (c. 1923) 1932 Copper Eskimo
116, 501, 777

"The first time a man goes out in a newly-covered kayak he must make water on its stern and put soft hairs from a lemming nest into the kayak. These hairs must be placed in under the ribs of the kayak under the skin, Ermalit, on which he himself sits.

Otherwise a special kayak amulet is the skin of a red-throated diver. It must be pushed right into the kayak in front of the skin one sits on. A bee may also be put there; it must not have been sewn up in skin, but must have a thin line of skin round it. Finally, one may also place a blown-up seal or caribou bladder in the part of the kayak."

12: Collinson--222 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 501

"In one particular, that of having no means of going upon the water, they [T. M: a group of Eskimo visiting the Enterprise] differed I believe from all the Esquimaux that have yet been met with. They were, however, perfectly acquainted with the name and use of the kayak, distinguishing it from the oomiak by the double paddle."

12: Collinson--274-275 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 501, 437

"Our kayak, which had been purchased in Port Clarence, had always excited great admiration among the natives; and I had told one of them that he should have it for five deer. [275] This week, however, they brought another alongside, and I at first thought they had misunderstood me. It fortunately afterwards struck me that they wished to exchange, which I was glad to do, in order to get a specimen of their work, where wood is so scarce: both were calculated to hold only one man; but ours was much larger, weighing 60 lbs., while theirs only weighed 26. In shape, too, they were somewhat different; ours, however, was slightly damaged; I therefore threw in an ash paddle, made of a broken oar, which sent them away highly pleased with the exchange."

12: Collinson--284 (1851-53) 1889 Copper Eskimo
116, 501, 221

"Although not as much deprived of wood as those [T. M: Eskimo;] with whom Sir John Ross's voyage has made us acquainted, they must be considered as a land not a sea people, that is to say, they have not the materials wherewith to build an oomiak; two kayaks are all we saw among them, and these of such frail materials, that the one I have weighs only 26lbs., and the keel is composed of three pieces of wood. So that there is no communication between Victoria Island and the continent, and very little between it and the islets along the coast, until the sea is bridged over by the ice. One portion of the tribe I presume remain on the main during the summer."

22: Richardson--310 (1848-49) 1851 Copper Eskimo
116, 501

"Our course along the inlet [JMR: Back's Inlet] was south 74° west for four miles and a half, when we perceived ten Eskimo tents on the opposite shore. Mr. Rae and Albert went ahead of the men, who were straggling very slowly along; and on coming opposite to the tents, and shouting, three Eskimos crossed the inlet in their kaiyaks, and cordially consented to ferry the whole party over. This small tribe have no 'umiaks;' and, as the kaiyaks carry only one person, some contrivance was requisite to render them available as ferry-boats. Our friends had already learned how to effect this from their intercourse with Mr. Simpson and his party in 1838, viz., by placing two poles across a pair of kaiyaks, and lashing them firmly together. In this way a single paddler could take over a sitter and his bundle. Four kaiyaks, being all they could muster, were brought into requisition...."

28: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1946
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

[P. 1]

MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE COPPER ESKIMO

INTRODUCTION

In 1914, when the Canadian Arctic Expedition established its headquarters at Bernard Harbour in Dolphin and Union Strait, on the western fringe of Copper Eskimo territory, the natives preserved their old culture, virtually unimpaired, despite contact with several explorers in the middle of the nineteenth century, and with others during the early years of the twentieth. The only visible change caused by these contacts was the introduction of a considerable quantity of iron, which the Eskimo hammered cold, as they hammered their native copper, and had already substituted for copper in knives, adzes, harpoon-heads, and needles. From lack of ammunition the only men who possessed rifles, five in number, had fallen back on the bow and arrow, which was still the universal weapon of the chase. Of the arrows not tipped with bone about two-thirds bore tips of hammered copper and only one-third tips of iron; the ice chisel and other tools retained their copper blades and points; and the soapstone pot for cooking meat held undisputed sway in every household. All clothing was of skin or fur, mainly from the caribou and the seal; and in cut and adornment it followed without change the styles set by earlier generations. The blubber of the seal, burned in a soapstone lamp, provided the only artificial light, and throughout the winter months all the energies of the Eskimo were concentrated on the pursuit of seals at their breathing holes in the sea ice.

Ten years later the situation had undergone a profound change. Native copper had become practically valueless and served for rivets only. Bows and arrows had disappeared, because every native was now armed with a high-powered rifle. Other weapons and tools had steel or iron blades, metal cooking pots had ousted the soapstone vessels, and primus lamps and kerosene lanterns were spreading from home to home. Native clothing was tending to follow western Eskimo patterns, and to be overlaid with bead-work, or with imported garments of cotton or wool. Dissatisfied with the old-fashioned snow-hut and skin-covered kayak, one native had even erected a plank cabin heated by an iron stove, and purchased a motor-boat to transport his household goods along the coast during the brief summer months. The tentacles of the fur trade had firmly gripped the region, and the trapping of foxes, animals of no economic importance in earlier times, now rivalled in importance the hunting of seals and caribou.

Fortunately, before this revolution occurred, the Canadian Arctic Expedition had brought out a large collection of Copper Eskimo specimens, nearly all of which are now stored in the National Museum at Ottawa. These specimens, and

shoes worn by both sexes during the greater part of the year. Steeped in urine for several hours they became waterproof, and served for summer boots, water buckets, quivers, and other articles.

For lines and lashings (which the men made, not the women) it was not necessary to tan the skin; after the removal of the hair the man merely soaked it for a third time in warm water, and cut it in a continuous spiral with his curved whittling knife, while his wife or a friend held the severed parts taut and slightly apart. In cutting he simply pressed the knife, guiding it with his thumb from below, but wherever the strip was very narrow he generally sawed the blade up and down, holding the severed parts in his left hand and guiding the blade with the left index. Newly cut lines were stretched taut between two or more poles out of doors to dry.

The second method of skinning a seal was used only when the owner required a bag with a small opening for storing blubber. The woman then cut the skin around the base of the neck and from the bottom of one hind flipper across to the other. To separate the flesh from the skin—and as far as possible also the blubber—she circled the long snow-knife round between them from each end; then by drawing back the flippers and severing them at the joints with her curved knife, she could draw off the skin over the tail. Subsequently she cut away most of the adhering blubber and sewed up the bottom, leaving the neck open to be tied with a sealskin cord when the poke was filled. In most cases she sewed a strap handle to each end to facilitate handling, as these pokes when filled with blubber weighed from 150 to 200 pounds; if the poke was small, however, she substituted for the straps a short stick thrust through the neck. The Copper Eskimo never skinned an animal through the mouth after the manner of the western Eskimo, or closed their pokes with stoppers.

Although bearded seals were numerous in Dolphin and Union strait, the Eskimo secured very few; and they used for harpoon and sled lines most of the skins of those they did kill, though they were fully aware of the superiority of bearded over foetid sealskins for foot gear. Even their kayaks they covered with the skin of the much commoner foetid seal. Naturally, they treated both kinds of skin in the same way.

Caribou Skins. More important even than sealskins to the Copper Eskimo were the caribou skins from which he made his bedding and the greater part of his clothes, as well as dog harnesses, spring and summer tents, and many other articles that were absolutely indispensable. He skinned the caribou in a way slightly different from that of the ordinary white hunter or from that of the Indians to the south. Beginning at the throat, he cut right down the belly to the tail, then from the hock of each leg up the back as far as the knee, continuing up the inside of the thigh until he reached the incision along the belly. He next punched away the skin from the body down one side, drew out the tail and pulled the skin off down to the feet, where he cut it away at the level of the front of the hoof. Then he slit it down the side of the cheek through the eye and round the base of the horn, and punched it loose with the handle of the hunting knife. Rolling the animal over, he pulled out the skin from below, punched it free of the whole body, and stripped it off down the remaining two legs. A final cut down this cheek similar to the one on the other side, and a few more punches, completed the operation. Thus the skin of the head was removed in three sections that joined at the neck; but the middle strip ran from between the horns to the top of the nose only, as the Eskimo never troubled to remove the skin around the nostrils. Whenever the horns were in the velvet the hunter could jerk the skin over them; but with old bulls whose horns had many branches and roots almost meeting on the forehead, he was often satisfied to strip only the cheeks and leave the skin on the middle of the face untouched. Occasionally he slit from the nose down to midway between the horns, leaving

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Packs. Dog packs were flat sheets of sealskin, oval in outline, and perforated with holes along the two longer sides for cross lacings. Each end was filled like a bag, and the middle section left empty so that it would lie flat on the dog's back. The trace of the harness was drawn down over one side bag, under the animal's belly, and up over the other side bag; it was then pulled taut, and fastened to the end of the harness. At the end of summer dog packs were often cut up for boot soles, or used on the floors of the snow-huts.

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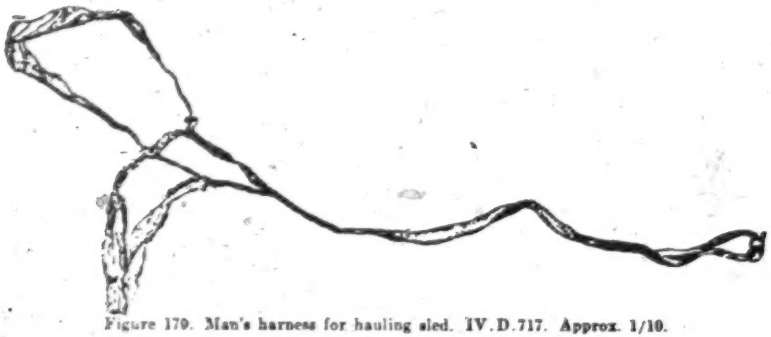

Figure 179. Man's harness for hauling sled. IV.D.717. Approx. 1/10.

482 [492] [284]

The average dog could carry only from 30 to 40 pounds, so that the Eskimo had to transport most of his belongings on his own back, inside his caribou-hide bedskin, by means of a shoulder strap and tump-line. The skin was laid flat on the ground and the articles piled in line on top of it, weight and bulk being distributed as evenly as possible between the two ends. The bundle was then rolled up and lashed with a long sealskin thong in two, or, in a large bundle, three places, the two ends and the middle. What remained of the thong became the shoulder strap; it passed from a loop held by a half hitch at one end of the bundle to a similar loop at the other. The tump-line, which was a band of sealskin or caribou skin with a thong tied to each end, fastened to the thong lashing of the bundle at any convenient points, but usually just behind the end loops.[1]

501

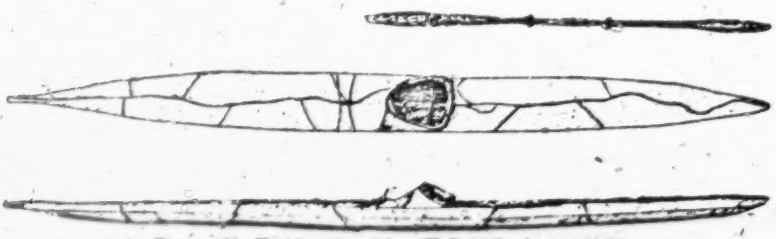

Figure 180. Kayak and paddle. IV.D.1057. Approx. 1/24.

[224]

Kayaks. The Copper Eskimo had never seen a umiak, and they used their kayaks (Figure 180) not for hunting seals, but only for ferrying across bays and rivers and for spearing caribou that had been driven into the water. Though a hunter generally made or bought a kayak at some time or other in his career,

[1] For illustrations see Reports of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, pt. A., Pl. 7, p. 220.

501 in most districts he used it so seldom that he either disposed of it after a year or two, or else broke up its frame and employed its wood and skin for other [422] purposes. At the time of our visit not one man in ten owned a kayak, or even the frame of one. Around Dolphin and Union Strait I saw only two kayaks, one of them owned by a Victoria Island native, but they became progressively more numerous as one travelled east to Bathurst Inlet. They kept the same shape everywhere, although they differed in length; and the frame was invariably 501 of spruce wood, the covering of sealskin. Generally they were longer, and, in 171 proportion to their length, narrower than kayaks to the westward. They lacked, also, attachments for a sealing harpoon or bird spear, and their bows and sterns had neither eyelets nor projecting horns to facilitate their transport on sleds. In Mackenzie Delta nearly every kayak bore an upstanding horn at each end, and along the Arctic coast of Alaska as far as Barrow, if not beyond, it was usual to have an eyelet in the bow and a horizontally projecting horn in the stern. Below are the measurements of five kayaks, two from Arctic Alaska, two from Mackenzie Delta, and one from Victoria Island within the territory of the Copper Eskimo.

—	Arctic Alaska		Mackenzie Delta		Victoria Island
	Ft. In.	Ft. In.	Ft. In.	Ft. In.	Ft. In.
Total length	15	13 3	15 8	15 10	2[illegible] 7
Greatest breadth	1 6	1 6	1 7½	1 6	1 3½
Distance of opening from stern	6 5	5 8	7	7	8 6
Depth of opening in front	1	1	11	1 2	1 2½
Depth of opening behind	9½	9	6½	8	7
Diameter of opening	1 4 by	1 11 by	1 4½ by	1 6 by	1 6
	1 6½	1 3½	1 6	1 6	

501 In Copper Eskimo kayaks, bows and sterns were practically straight and the deck level, except just forward of the opening for the paddler, where the front of the gunwale, as usual, was raised by an angular arch. This gunwale was formed by two circular hoops of wood that bound the skin covering between them and were tightly lashed together with sealskin thongs through holes near their rims. Lashed to the deck a few inches in front of the hole was the paddle [32] rest (Figure 181), an L-shaped piece of bone with the upstanding "horn" tilted slightly backward; by resting the middle of his double-bladed paddle against this horn, the hunter obtained greater leverage. I saw no other attachment to a kayak, and was told that the hunter who carried a lance merely pushed its [126] butt under the lashings of the paddle rest. From Capt. J. Bernard, however, I [237] obtained the curious baleen object illustrated in Figure 182, which he stated had been used in some way on a Coronation Gulf kayak. Possibly it supported the skin deck, its two triangles fitting on the gunwales; or it may have been fastened on the deck and lances thrust through the triangles.

501 Figure 180 shows the wooden paddle of the kayak illustrated in the same 32 drawing. It is 11 feet long, ridged at each grip, and edged with bone on the two 322 blades. The bone is grooved to fit over the wood and secured with antler rivets that in three places have fallen out and have been replaced by iron nails. Over each of the two ridges is a sealskin ring three-quarters of an inch in diameter, made by coiling a thong of sealskin around a base of the same material; it kept 501 the water from dripping down the blade onto the paddler's hand. Having seen in the Coronation Gulf area only two other paddles, which I did not examine

closely, I cannot say whether or not this specimen is typical. One thing is certain, however, the Copper Eskimo never used the single-bladed paddle that is now so common in the western Arctic.

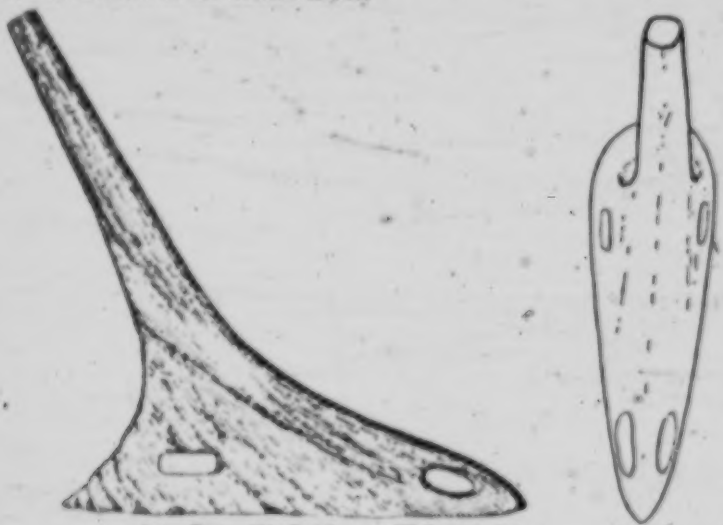

Figure 181. Paddle end. IV.D.1643. 1/1.

As the kayak was useless in winter, the Copper Eskimo hunter commonly stripped off its skin covering and cached the frame in some convenient place, weighting it down with a few stones. One man cached his frame near the headquarters of our expedition, where I might have studied its construction in detail; unfortunately, I let the opportunity pass. If a hunter desired to cache his kayak during the summer months, when its skin cover might be torn to shreds by dogs and foxes, he sometimes raised it on stone pillars. Two such pillars on Victoria Island, built of flat slabs of dolomite, stood about 5 feet high and about 6 feet apart.

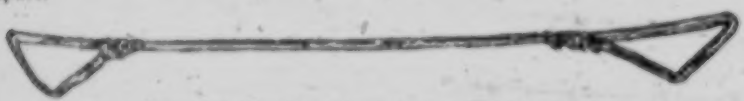

Figure 182. Kayak appliance, of baleen. IV.D.1647. 1/3.

PASTIMES

The pastimes of the Copper Eskimo have been described in Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition, vol. XII, ch. XVII. Only two or three of them required specially made apparatus.

Cup and Ball. For the "cup and ball", or "ring and pin" game, as it is variously called, the Copper Eskimo invariably used the humerus of the bearded seal. They drilled one hole through the centre of the smaller end, but in the larger end as many as possible, even continuing them at times down one or both faces. Figure 183 shows a typical specimen.

29: Jenness E-5 (1914-1916) 1959
ND8 Copper Eskimo ND8

although they mentioned huts of stone, still standing in certain places, that a race of dwarfs had built in earlier days. Could it be that the natives had simply forgotten the customs of their forefathers, or was this wooden house in their country a relic of some ancient tribe that had either moved westward or become extinct?

Many small differences between the Eskimos here and their kinsmen in the Mackenzie River delta spoke in favour of the second theory. The Coronation Gulf people possessed no large open boats such as the western natives used for travelling along the coast, and they never employed the one-man canoes or kayaks for hunting seals. Their tools and weapons were much less varied, their clothing of different pattern, and their skill in carving greatly inferior. Altogether their culture seemed less developed than that of the western Eskimos, although the people themselves were not inferior in intelligence.

A year later Girling excavated a wooden house close to the ruin we had discovered on this journey. The objects he recovered from its floor, after removing the surface soil, were entirely strange to the local Eskimos, although familiar to some Alaskan natives, who had unearthed many similar specimens in their own country. Since then one discovery has succeeded another, so that today we know that the people among whom I wandered for two years had themselves moved into